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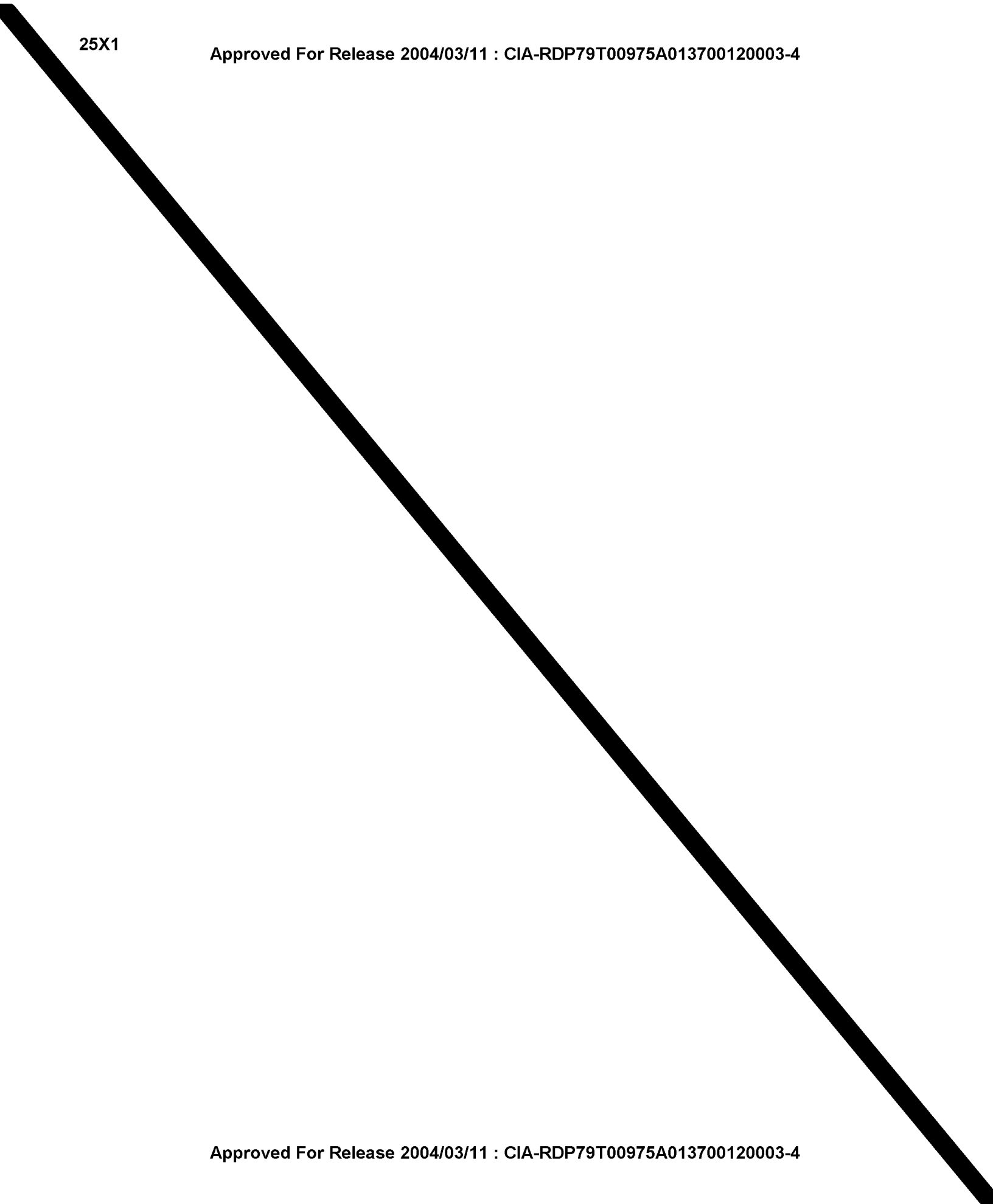

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Lebanon: President Hilu and caretaker Premier Karami have reached an understanding on the fedayeen.

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LEBANON: PRESIDENT HILU AND CARETAKER PREMIER KARAMI HAVE APPARENTLY REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING ON THE FEDAYEEN THAT WILL PERMIT KARAMI TO FORM A BROADLY BASED CABINET.

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THE UNDERSTANDING IS PROBABLY ALONG THE LINES OF AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH, [redacted] HILU LATE LAST WEEK INTENDED TO PROPOSE TO KARAMI. UNDER IT, THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD ORALLY AGREE TO A FEDAYEEN PRESENCE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF THE COUNTRY. THE FEDAYEEN, IN TURN, WOULD AGREE NEITHER TO MOUNT OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY NOR TO ENGAGE IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE LEBANESE ARMY WOULD BE UNDER SECRET ORDERS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION AGAINST THE FEDAYEEN IF THE AGREEMENT WERE BROKEN.

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SUCH A SETTLEMENT COULD BE SHORT-LIVED, HOWEVER. AN UNEASY TRUCE CONTINUES WITH THE FEDAYEEN, WHO HAVE WITHDRAWN TO UNPOPULATED AREAS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, PRESUMABLY TO AWAIT ORDERS FROM THEIR LEADERS, BUT HILU EXPECTS THEM TO APPLY PRESSURE ON ANY NEW CABINET FOR FURTHER CONCESSIONS. HE IS APPREHENSIVE THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING WITH KARAMI AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN GENERAL MAY NOT SURVIVE THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN THAT THE FEDAYEEN ARE SURE TO MOUNT WHEN THEY REALIZE THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO HOLD TO ITS CONDITIONS.

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